

BIOBLITZ

The Urban Forest Grades: K-8

Overview: (communicated by teacher)

A BioBlitz, or biological survey, is a great way to record the biodiversity, or variety of life, in an urban forest. During an official BioBlitz event, scientists, community members, students, and naturalists work together to find as many trees, plants, and animals as possible in a specific amount of time. A less formal BioBlitz can be achieved within the classroom by taking photos, using apps like iNaturalist, and research. As a class, explore your school's urban forest and see how many organisms you can find!

Method:

1. Explore the Urban Forest:

Explore the urban forest that surrounds the school with your class.

2. Photograph Organisms:

Taking turns or using their own phones or iPads, students will take photographs of trees, plants, animals, or any other organisms they come across while exploring.

3. Identify Organisms:

As a class, try to identify the organisms by researching key features or sharing photos on the iNaturalist app.

4. Record and Sketch Observations:

Once the organism is identified, add any facts you learned about the species into the journal and draw a sketch of the observation.

5. Technology Use:

Students can take turns using phones or iPads for observations or work together as a class if technology is limited.

At a glance

Skills:

Critical Thinking
Discussion
Urban Forestry

Lesson Delivery:

(Best/Suggested method in bold)

- **Whole group**
- **Small group**
- **Independent work**

Location:

(Best/Suggested location in bold)

- **Outdoor**
- Indoors

Materials:

Necessary

- iPad/Smartphone
- Pencil/Pen
- iNaturalist app

Optional

- Color Pencils

Image	Common Name	Scientific Name	Interesting Facts
	Yellow passionflower	Passiflora lutea	Native to North America, host plant for Gulf fritillary butterfly
	Widow Skimmer	Libellula luctuosa	Lives near warm water, females lay eggs without the help of a male to guard



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Modifications & Extensions		
K-2*	3-5*	6-8*
 Modification: “I Spy” Nature Hunt Instead of using tech, give students a simple checklist or picture scavenger hunt of things to look for: • A tree with smooth bark • A flying insect • A flower • Something that's green • Something that moves • Have them draw what they find or tell a partner about it.	 Modification: Team BioBlitz with Journals In pairs or small groups, students use a class iPad or phone to take photos of any interesting organisms they find. After the walk: • Try to identify at least 3–5 species • Draw each organism • Write one fun fact about each (use books, iNaturalist, or class discussion)	 Modification: Full iNaturalist BioBlitz Divide students into research teams: • Team Flora (plants & trees) • Team Fauna (animals & insects) • Team Fungi & Extras (mushrooms, moss, lichens) • Students take photos, use iNaturalist to identify species, and create an entry for each one in their BioBlitz log with: • Name of species • Sketch • Key features • 1–2 ecological facts (e.g., “Provides food for birds”)
 Extension: Build a “Biodiversity Wall” After the walk, students can create a classroom mural of what they found using drawings, cut-outs, or craft materials. Label it “Our School’s Wild Life!”	 Extension: Class Biodiversity Book Each student picks their favorite organism to turn into a page of a class field guide. Include photos/drawings, name, and a cool fact. Bind them into a book and students can use the book to identify different things in nature.	 Extension: Biodiversity Data Report Back in the classroom, students calculate: • Total number of species found • Most common species • Rare/unique finds • Top habitats on campus • Turn this into a mini science report or digital slideshow to present findings to another class or the school staff.



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Practice making your own BioBlitz journal, using the chart below!

Sketch an Observation	Common Name/ Scientific Name	Interesting Fact